CD 2009-- 63/64

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Ivars Taurins, conductor

Thursday, April 9, 2009
7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

Program

Canzon primi toni à 8, C.170 (*Sacrae Symphoniae,* 1597) — **Giovanni Gabrieli** (c1554/7-1612)

Timothy Watson, trumpet
Stevie-Ray Arsenault, trumpet
William Callaghan, horn
Nathan Fanning, trombone
Andrea Vaughan, trumpet
Marcel Sekine, trumpet
Anna Millan, horn
Nicolas Mahon, trombone

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36 — **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827)

Adagio molto - Allegro con brio
Larghetto
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro molto

- INTERMISSION -

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64 — **Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893)

Andante - Allegro con anima
Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
Valse - Allegro moderato
Finale: Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace - Moderato assai e molto maestoso

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Ivars Taurins, conductor

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Program Notes

GIOVANNI GABRIELI (c1554/7-1612)
anzon primi toni à 8 (Sacrae Symphoniae, 97)

Venice was one of the most powerful, splendid and cosmopolitan cities in 16th and 17th century Europe. By 1585, when Giovanni Gabrieli became organist at San Marco, the Venetian Republic had a long tradition as a dominant player on the political scene. It was a strategically located Adriatic port, a centre of trade and manufacturing, and a meeting-point for cultural activity of all kinds. Music lay at the heart of the ceremonial occasions in this wealthy city republic and could be heard in its many churches and public theatres, on the streets in civic processions, and in the meetings of the confraternities (or *scuole*) that flourished in all walks of life. The great Basilica of St. Mark's was the focal point for its rich tradition of music-making. Gabrieli inherited its practice of acoustically sonorous performance. Both he and, before him, his uncle Andrea provided the ceremonial instrumental music for St. Mark's, taking advantage of the two choir lofts on each side of the altar music for *cori spezzati* ('broken', or divided choirs of instruments) and several other locations within the basilica where instruments (and in religious music, the voices) could be positioned. His greatest achievement was in raising instrumental music and its musical forms of *canzona* and *sonata* to the level of the hitherto dominant vocal and choral music. abrieli's first publication was an edition of is uncle's works, titled *Concerti*, in 1587. He followed this ten years later with own his first volume of *Sacrae symphoniae*. This collection includes music for six to 16 voices, or parts. A second volume was published posthumously in 1615, with up to 19 parts. These publications, for both voices and instruments, reflect the exceptionally large instrumental and vocal resources available at St. Mark's, as well as the virtuosity of individual players and singers.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36 (1801-2)

Never in Beethoven's life did art imitate life less than while he was creating his Second Symphony. His most exuberant, high-spirited, outgoing and youthful symphony was written while he was living through the bleakest days of his life. He was 30 when he began sketches for the work. He took the sketches with him when, on his doctor's advice, he went to spend several months in the summer and fall of 1802 in a village just outside Vienna. Even as he did the main work on his new symphony, Beethoven grew despondent with the realisation that his hearing was rapidly failing. In October 1802 he wrote not only the final notes of the Second Symphony but also a harrowing document we now know as the *Heiligenstadt Testament*. It is his will, addressed to his brothers Carl and Johann, in which he speaks with anguish about how deteriorating hearing and a wretched and painful medical condition led him to contemplate suicide, held back only by a desire to achieve great things. Somehow, through all this despair, Beethoven found renewed strength. When he completed the Second Symphony, he was furiously working on three or four compositions at a time and recognised that he was breaking new ground. "Everyday I come closer to my goal which I can sense, but don't know how to describe," he wrote to a friend.

Outwardly, the symphony has the same basic shape as a symphony by Mozart or Haydn. The orchestra he uses is the standard double woodwinds, horns, trumpets, timpani and strings of the later classical symphony. But the work played is longer than his First Symphony, which was completed three years earlier. No one had written a longer symphony. And no one had written a louder, more sonorous symphony. The opening movement explodes with contrasts of soft and loud, with the loud being frequently *fortissimo*, a term employed infrequently by Beethoven's predecessors. The arresting chords at the very beginning command us to sit up and pay attention. Nothing new here; Haydn had learnt this trick to deal with London's chattering classes. The introduction the chords lead to, though, is unusually powerful and expansive and it builds a heightened sense of anticipation. The tension is released in the busy, nervous energy of the *Allegro con brio* with its forward thrusting momentum and sense of purpose. Beethoven's architectural powers are impressive. For the most part, the music is built out of short themes. The main motif of just four notes forms the basis of much of the development of the

movement. By being used in a structural rather than a decorative way, the theme anticipates the well-known dramatic four-note motto of the Fifth Symphony. The second theme, bouncy and march-like at first almost immediately develops a Type A personality. Punchy, off-the-beat chords increase the drive of the music. This is Beethoven in high spirits. Berlioz, never one to admire music where individuality is less than striking, spoke of the work wholeheartedly and declared that "it smiles throughout."

The radiant melodies of the *Larghetto* breathe with a feeling of 18th century leisure and luxury. This is one of the sweetest, most pastoral movements in any of the symphonies and, in its unhurried expansiveness, it provided a model for Schubert. "What abandon in his gaiety! What wit! What sallies!," Berlioz wrote about the Scherzo that follows. What economy too in Beethoven's first symphonic scherzo. With unerring sense of balance and proportion between movements, Beethoven supplies a perfect foil for the broad *Larghetto* with the Scherzo's brevity and terse contrasts between *forte* and *piano*, woodwind and strings. The good humour continues in the finale, which Berlioz regarded as a sort of second Scherzo. The movement is one of Beethoven's most characterful finales. It opens with a characteristic whoop and gruff snarl, every aspect of whose humour Beethoven uncovers before an extended and powerful coda brings the symphony to a rousing end.

PYOTR IL'YICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64 (1888)

"I am exceedingly anxious to prove to myself, as to others, that I am not played out as a composer," Tchaikovsky wrote to his long-time patron Nadezda von Meck, acknowledging fear of failure as one of the strongest of all motivators for a creative artist. "Have I told you that I intend to write a symphony? The beginning was difficult, but now inspiration seems to have come. We shall see . . ." Tchaikovsky had expressed a similar fear to his brother Modest a month earlier, in May 1888. But work was progressing well in the pleasant surroundings of a new dacha he had built in the woods at Frolovskoe, just outside Moscow. He had even noted down an outline for the first movement, though this cryptic note was to prove the only indicator of any underlying program in the Fifth: "Introduction. Complete resignation to Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. Allegro. (I) Murmurs, doubts, plains, reproaches against XXX . . . (II) Shall I throw myself in the embrace of faith?"

A decade earlier, Tchaikovsky had provided von Meck with a detailed programmatic outline of his Fourth Symphony. It had been his main work for her during the 13 years of their relationship. "This is Fate," he wrote of the urgent figure that he hurls forward in the first bars of the Fourth Symphony. "One can only resign oneself and lament in vain." Fate is again mentioned in Tchaikovsky's outline for the Fifth, but not the struggle. Tchaikovsky now appears resigned to his lot in life (whatever, or whoever, "XXX" may be) and willing to trust in Providence and faith. He said little about the piece, though he did once write to his patron about adopting faith: "The intelligent man who believes in God has a shield against which the blows of fate are absolutely vain."

Fate makes a low-key entrance at the very beginning of the symphony. Its darkly coloured, two-bar clarinet theme is sombre and muted. Its rhythm, however, is distinctive and forms a motto theme that will reappear throughout the symphony. It is re-worked in the major key but with ominous force in the middle of the slow movement and even more menacingly towards the end. Its appearance in the third-movement waltz is more surreptitious. In the finale, however, it will appear transformed into a triumphant march of victory as Tchaikovsky completely resigns himself to Fate. For now though, in the introduction, the short theme builds a keen sense of anticipation and eventually evolves into the subdued march-like main theme of the *Allegro con anima*, first introduced by woodwinds. The strings soon whip the theme into a state of great agitation. The second theme, although providing momentary light and contrast, does little to dislocate the feeling of control and subjugation that pervades the movement. Its three sections – a yearning appeal from the strings, then joyful, folk-like dance and, finally, the tenderest of waltzes - are little changed when they reappear. By the time the dark coda concludes, little has been resolved.

The slow movement introduces one of the most celebrated of Tchaikovsky's romantic tunes, an expansive, supplicatory melody given to the horn. This and two additional melodies - an oboe countermelody and a new, questioning theme introduced by the clarinet – add a humane,

compassionate dimension into the symphonic argument. But comfort gives way to conflict with two brusque and quite unexpected intrusions of the Fate motif. By the end of a movement of great drama, resolution remains a distant objective.

The emotional trajectory of the symphony is then suspended with one of Tchaikovsky's characteristically elegant waltzes. Its smooth contours are only lightly punctuated towards the end when the Fate motif intrudes. Just as the opening movement opened with an extended introduction of increasing intensity, so the finale is prefaced by a sequence in which the rhythm of the Fate motif is prominent. The score indicates *Andante maestoso*. Yet the tension within the music – compounded by memories of the brutal force of the intrusion of the Fate motif in the beautiful slow movement – creates an emotional ambiguity, even as it mounts. It finally explodes into determined snapping as the strings introduce the finale's main theme. A snarl from the lower brass seems poised to re-introduce the Fate motif as the sonata-form movement lays out its themes. But the next we hear of the Fate motif is when the higher brass sing it with a triumphant air. The feeling is infectious and the mood conquers the entire orchestra, as a grand military procession brings out the heavy guns. But is this a triumph of evil or have we travelled through adversity to triumph in the archetypal heroic journey of the romantic symphony? Trumpet fanfares and a full halt in the proceedings herald a determined, if not ultimately decisive, maestoso march of triumph, with the slow-march main theme from the opening movement blazing *fffff* from the trumpets.

After conducting the first performance of his Fifth Symphony in Saint Petersburg November 17, 1888 and a subsequent performance in Prague, Tchaikovsky remained uncertain about his new symphony. "After each performance I become more and more convinced that my new symphony is a failure," he wrote to Nadezda von Meck. "The consciousness of all this - and also of what it may indicate regarding the weakening of my creative powers - depresses me greatly. It seems the symphony is too garish, too massive, too patchy and insincere, too long, and generally of very little appeal. Except for Taneyev [Tchaikovsky's student and successor at the Moscow Conservatoire], who insists the Fifth is my best work, all my friends have a low opinion of it. Is it possible I have already written myself out?" The continuing popularity of his Fifth Symphony proves that, at a musical level, Tchaikovsky has written a compelling symphonic musical argument. The emotional and musical equilibrium of his next symphony, his masterpiece, the *Pathétique*, proves that his best was yet to come. It was also to prove an epitaph on his life.

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Comments welcomed: khnotes@sympatico.ca

Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award Concert

The Persephone Trio
Alexa Wilks, violin
Bryan Holt, cello
Grace Kim, piano

playing works by Haydn, Lau and Brahms

Tuesday, April 28, 2009
7:30 pm. Walter Hall
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Biographies

Ivars Taurins conducts symphonic and choral repertoire with equal expertise. Founder and director of the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir since 1981, he was also principal violist of the Tafelmusik Orchestra for its first 23 years. Under his direction the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir has been widely praised for its clarity and brilliance, and in 1991 was awarded the Canada Council's Healey Willan Prize "in recognition of the consistently high level of achievement by the choir and its unique contribution to choral art in Canada."

Principal Baroque Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra since 2001, Ivars Taurins is also active as a guest conductor with orchestras and choirs across Canada. Recent engagements include guest appearances with Edmonton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Victoria, Saskatoon and Windsor Symphonies, Orchestra London (Canada), the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, Symphony Nova Scotia, Symphony New Brunswick, Vancouver Chamber Choir, Pro Coro Canada, the Elora Festival Singers, The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, the Amabile Youth Choir, and Lyra Baroque Orchestra (Minneapolis). Mr. Taurins was director of the 2000 Ontario Youth Choir, the 2003 Nova Scotia Youth Choir and the 2004 Alberta University and College Choir. He was also guest director of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra. He has been invited to direct the Ontario Youth Choir 2009. He has also collaborated with the Canadian Brass as musical advisor and conductor for various recording projects. Recently, Mr. Taurins directed a Respighi opera with the Glenn Gould School, Royal Conservatory of Music.

His regular appearances as conductor of the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir and Orchestra have received widespread critical acclaim and are frequently heard on CBC Stereo. He has conducted the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir on recordings for the Hyperion and CBC labels. His recordings (CBC Records) with Tafelmusik, which include the complete choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, the complete Bach motets, and a CD of French 19th- and 20th-century *a capella* music entitled *Chants sacrés et profanes*, have all received great critical acclaim and Juno nominations. A recording celebrating the 25th anniversary of the choir, featuring the music of Bach, Vivaldi and Mondonville was released last season. The choir was featured at the Toronto International Choral Festival in 2002, and participated in Canadian Voices (Feb. 2004), a festival celebrating 50 years of professional choral singing in Canada. Ivars Taurins and the choir have premiered works by Omar Daniels, Chan Ka Nin and, most recently, Brian Cherney and Paul Frehner with Soundstreams Canada. The choir has also premiered works by Imant Raminsh and Christos Hatzis.

A passionate lecturer and teacher, Mr. Taurins teaches conducting and baroque ensembles at the University of Toronto. He is in demand as a guest lecturer, adjudicator and clinician. He was guest lecturer at Podium 2000, the conference of the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors. He has been a guest teacher at the Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec, the University of Western Ontario, the University of Alberta, and at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto. Mr. Taurins is director of the vocal/choral programme at the annual Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute.

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Violin I
[illegible]tthew Chan
[illegible]en Nathan Chia
Madeline Kapp
Joyce Kim
James Kruspe
Luri Lee
Takayo Noguchi, *concertmaster, Beethoven*
Colin Repas
Hoi Wing (Eros) Tang
Monica Westerholm
Jane Yang, *concertmaster, Tchaikovsky*

Violin II
Andreea-Madalina Arbone
Katherine Avery
Chang (Coco) Chen, *principal, Beethoven*
Han-Yu (Holly) Cheng
Oriana Leman
Aviva Lufer
Iain Mckay, *principal, Tchaikovsky*
Jennifer Anne Melvin
Natasha Rollings
Adriana Arcila Tascon

Viola
Mohammed Abu Ramadan
Louisa Cornacchia
[illegible]gan Gilsenan
[illegible]ngmin Kim, *principal*
Inhye Park
Emma Vachon-Tweney
Robin Wenglewick

Cello
Amahl Arulanandam
Andrew Ascenzo, *principal, Beethoven*
Brenton Chan
Jason Eui-Sung Cho
Cydney Grogan
Bryan Holt, *principal, Tchaikovsky*
Christopher Hwang
Eriona Jaupi
Yeun Woo Kim
Mi So Mok

Double Bass
Joshua Bell
Michael Brough
John Deshman
Benjamin Finley
Alexander Kotyk
Samantha McLellan, *principal*

Flute
Alberta Brown, *and piccolo*
Roseen Giles
Anna Kolosowksi
Sara Moorhouse

Oboe
Victoria Hong
Laura Roy

Clarinet
Mark Dimitroff
Alix Haywood

Bassoon
Rebecca Norman
Margaret Stephenson

Horn
William Callaghan
Elizabeth Lance
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James Tizzard
Emilly Rapson

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Stevie-Ray Arsenault
Marcel Sekine
Timothy Watson
Andrea Vaughan

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Nicholas Mahon
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